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IN MEMORIAM.

DISCOURSE,

DELIVERED AT

EASTHAMPTON, MASS., MARCH 8, 1863,

AT THE FUNERAL OF

MRS. EMELINE G. WRIGHT,

WIFE OF

LUTHER WRIGHT.

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By A. M. COLTON,  
Pastor of the First Church, in Easthampton.

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# DISCOURSE.

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PROV. xxxi: 10—31.

WHO CAN FIND A VIRTUOUS WOMAN? FOR HER PRICE IS FAR ABOVE RUBIES, ETC.

SUCH, so truthful and so beautiful, the Scripture portraiture of female piety. It is religion in ground work and grand elements. It is religion in the two aspects and bearings proper to it and inseparable from it, viz. love to God, and love to man. The *first* commandment, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart. And the *second*, like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments, Christ says, hang all the law and the prophets. Let us not try to *separate* these two, even in idea. First, the part toward God. Here the source and mainspring, as is fitting. We came from God in our creation, and we go to him in our death. Author of our being and all our blessings—giving us our life with all its circumstances and surroundings; and taking away our life when and where and how it pleases him; and, more still, our Redeemer and Saviour, The Lord our righteousness; *Alpha* and *Omega* in salvation; Author and Finisher of our faith; Forgiver of our sins; Justifier of our sons; Enlightener of our darkness; Quickener of our sloth; our Helper in toils; our Guide amid perplexities; our Comforter in sorrows; our Supporter in death; our Resurrection from the grave; our Judge in the last day; and our Portion forever—"for of him, and through him, and to him, are all things:"—*why* should it not be, that piety, all that bears that good name and is worthy of it—*why* should not such piety have for its rudiment, first and chief, this love to God, this

love supreme? Turn your eye to Him first; pay him this homage; for you owe him all you have, and are, and hope to be, in time and in eternity. "My son, give me thine heart." Never was call more fitting and binding. Never was duty more incumbent, nor privilege more precious. "Acquaint now thyself with God;" "looking unto Jesus;" "that you may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings; being made conformable unto his death." Thus is it with the beginnings of all true piety—the reverent homage of the creature towards his Creator; the trust of the sinner toward Christ his Saviour. I stand in doubt of a "piety," so called, in which God is not all in all. My Bible and my reason alike reject it. Tell me not, at this point, of *human* doings and devisings, as if they of themselves alone were enough. "Sirs, ye have taken away my Lord, and I know not where ye have laid him." Those builders have rejected the head-stone of the corner. They build on the sand. They work with perishable materials, hay, wood, and stubble. That structure, fair as it may seem, will fall in the trial, which shall try every man's work; and great will be the fall of it. That ground-work is fatally defective. "For other foundation can no man lay, than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."

Does some now remind me that the Scripture I have read, speaks of piety in the *Old Testament* type of it, as founded on the *fear* of God, rather than some other and different affection? Granted. And what then? What is that fear? "The fear of God is that holy disposition or gracious habit formed in the soul by the Holy Spirit, whereby we are inclined to obey all God's commands; and evidences itself, by dread of his displeasure; desire of his favor; regard for his excellencies; submission to his will; gratitude for his benefits; sincerity in his worship; and conscientious obedience to his commands." Such is the Scripture account of this fear, what it is, and how it shows itself. Produce now the specimen—a good man, having this godly fear in him, and swayed by it. Has that man heard the glad tidings, and rejected them? Has he heard the gracious call, and spurned it? Has he beheld the Lamb of God, and trampled him under foot? Has he accepted the Old

Testament, and rejected the New; giving evidence the while that God's true fear is in him, a fountain of life? Never was such an instance—never in all the world. It is not a possible fact. It is not a supposable supposition. Such fear, and Christ rejected? No; it cannot be. Why the very *definition* of this fear includes, by all necessities and by all certainties, includes the *acceptance* of Christ, and that too with joyful readiness, in the moment of his being preached, that he died for our sins, and rose again for our justification. Had in him this godly fear? Oh! that man, like another Simeon, was waiting for the consolation of Israel. With longing eyes he was watching for the dawn—watching more than they that watch for the morning. And when the day-star arose, with what joy did he hail that light from darkness, that life from death!

“Deep horror then my vitals froze,  
Death-struck I ceased the tide to stem;  
When suddenly a star arose,  
It was the Star of Bethlehem.”

Such, in briefest view, and in its ground-work, is the piety which the Scriptures enjoin. The names of it are different—love of God—fear of God—knowledge of God, wisdom, understanding, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ—names different, but the substance is one. It is “the life of God in the soul of man.” Here the foundation; and here we must build. Without these good beginnings, there is, and can be, no hope, and no salvation, for you and for me.

But, my friends, religion has another side—the *human*. Not human in respect of its source and sustenance, but human in respect of its out-growth and evidences. We speak not now of the source, but of the *streams*. Suppose the germ and root—yea, and trunk also, and the branches: then look for the foliage and fruit. “A good tree bringeth forth good fruit.” The pure fountain sendeth forth sweet and healing streams. It is piety *man-ward*, because it involves *duties*, high and commanding duties, toward our fellow men. “The second commandment, like unto the first, is, Thou shalt love



thy neighbor as thyself." The Antinomian tells me he trusts in God. Very well, so far. But does he nothing more? Then has he not entered one great and broad domain of piety. He has omitted, if not the weightier matter, at least a matter equally essential and sublime. Hast thou faith? It is well. But, Sir, show me thy faith by thy works. Give us indeed the Roman epistle by Paul; nothing could be better. But you may not reject the epistle of James. "Abraham believed in God." But it was a *living* faith, active, operative, mighty, impelling him to all goodness, and all long-suffering with joyfulness. "Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also." And what works? Will you do them? My friend, you are engaged and committed—registered for the whole voyage of life—enlisted and sworn in for the whole warfare of human toils and good endeavors. *Now* keeping the first commandment, you shall keep the second also. Now loving God, you shall love your brother also. Now you shall add to faith virtue, christian boldness, and all the humanities, moralities, honesties, charities, graces, to beautify and bless this fallen world. Already are you in the very midst of human and christian assiduities,

"Where each can feel his brother's sigh,  
And with him bear a part;  
Where sorrow flows from eye to eye,  
And joy from heart to heart."

You have *work* before you now, demanding all your time, and mind, and strength; work for every day; work for every walk and way of life; work for every relation and sphere in which men move—the family, the neighborhood, the school, the church, the state. Go to the poor, and give them bread. Go to the sick, and bear their sicknesses. Go to the wounded, and heal their bruises. Go to the sorrowing, and wipe away their tears. Go to the out-casts, and bring them home. Go to the sinning, and tell them of a Saviour. Go to the penitent, and point them to Jesus. Go to the dying, and tell them of him

who died that they might live—live unto God, and live eternally in heaven. Go to those neediest of all mortals, the proud, the gay, the rich, the titled, and, if it may be so, by help of infinite power and grace, persuade them to become rich toward God, very kings and priests unto God and the Father, that they may reign with him for ever and ever. Can you show a well-spent day? Have you gone the rounds:—into the high places and the low; into penitentiaries and prisons; into dram-shops and dens of infamy; into slave-pens; into hospitals and asylums; into camps and battle-fields; into marts of commerce; into highways of traffic and travel; into the chief places of concourse; into the palace of splendor, and the cottage of want; into the streets and lanes of the city; to the mount, and there preached to the multitude; to Cana of Galilee, and there turned water into wine; to the well of Jacob, and spoken to that Samaritan woman; to Jericho, and restored Bartimeus to sight; to Bethany, and raised Lazarus to life; to the Mount of Olives, and wept over Jerusalem; to Chorazin, and Bethsaida, and Caperneum, where most of Christ's mighty works were done; to Jerusalem, and Antioch, and Ephesus, and Athens, and Rome also: preaching the word every where, to Jew and Gentile, to Barbarian, Scythian, bond and free; scattering the good seed, and sowing beside all waters; making the wilderness and solitary place to be glad for you, and the desert to rejoice and blossom as the rose? Truly the field is the world, and the harvest is plenteous. The heathen come bending to you. The Macedonian cry is heard by you. Ethiopia stretches out her hands unto you. The isles wait for you.

“ From Greenland's icy mountains,  
 From India's coral strand,  
 Where Afric's sunny fountains  
 Roll down their golden sand;  
 From many an ancient river,  
 From many a palmy plain,  
 They call us to deliver  
 Their land from error's chain.”

Oh! this *human* side of piety—*work* for us—work for all—blessed work, which an angel might covet—work for men to

do, and for women, and for children—toils, crosses, prayings, givings, to bless and save this ruined world.

But I seem to hear some one say, I, for my part, would have assigned to me, if I might, some humbler and more private sphere of christian duty. Just what we were thinking of. Just the sphere, magnified and made honorable, in these portraitures before us. “There’s no place like home.” The domestic and family scenes — woman’s peculiar sphere — her altar of sacrifice, and her throne of power, where she sits queen, adorning the position, and herself honored by it. Woman at home; the christian mother at home, yes, *christian* mother, “a woman that feareth the Lord,” such an one in her own peculiar place and prerogative;

“Fulfilling well her part,  
With sympathizing heart,  
In all the cares of life and love.”

Come and look on this sweet picture. Gladly, did the time permit, would I examine with you this portrait, each lineament and feature, each line, and trace, and touch, of grace and beauty. One of the “honorable women.” “Hail, thou that art highly favored, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women.” “Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her. Many daughters have done virtuously; but thou excellest them all. Favor is deceitful, and beauty is vain; but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised.”

Such, briefly and imperfectly told, is christian piety in its nature and aims. Let me, in concise form, sum up its leading attributes and properties.

Religion, then, is *proportionate*—supreme love to God, and subordinate love to one’s neighbor.

Religion is of the *heart*, there the seat and throne; there the vitalizing and energizing forces; mainspring of goodness; fountain whence the healing streams do flow.

Religion is *practical*, having to do, not with theories and speculations, nor with visions and ecstasies, but with well-doing, with work, human duties, christian duties, toils and cross-bearings for Christ’s sake and the good of men.



Religion is *impartial*, no respecter of persons, but doing good to all men, high and low, rich and poor, as one has opportunity.

Religion is *universal*; not as to the subjects of it, but as to its objects and ends, furnishing fitting good work for all good people, whatever their rank or place in life; and work whereby they may "in all things glorify God."

Religion is *beneficent*, good deeds, almsgivings, easing pain, visiting the sick, comforting the afflicted, ministering good things to all children of suffering and of want.

Religion is *happifying*; blessed work, blessing him that gives and him that takes, "more blessed to give, than to receive."

Religion is *beautiful*. Look on that picture, man or woman, glad to spend and be spent, if others thereby may be rendered good and useful and happy. Nothing else can begin to compare with it for grace and comeliness.

Religion is mighty through God; able to incite and impel, to enlighten and cleanse, to guide and sustain amid toils and trials; arming the soul with fortitude, courage, constancy, in the warfare against sin; and giving victory, glorious triumph, in the hour of death.

Religion is *needful to man*, is the one thing needful—

"More needful this than glittering wealth,  
Or aught the world bestows,  
Not reputation, food, or health,  
Can give us such repose."

Religion is *divine*—in men, but not of them, but from heaven, too great, too good, to have originated in man's might or wisdom: divine implantation and culture; for it is God who worketh in you, both to will and to do.

Religion is *through Christ*,—bears his likeness, does his work, blessed work of saving men. "Of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:" "And ye are complete in him."

Religion is *enduring*, eternal as the years of God, plant of righteousness, flourishing in beauty here for a little season,

and then transplanted to a fairer clime and a more congenial soil, there to flourish in glory forever.

Religion hath an exceeding great reward. Faith, hope, joy, peace; an approving conscience and a smiling God; comforted in all trials;

“ Glad to find in every station ;  
Something still to do or bear.”

having a good name while living; leaving precious memories when gone; and then,—Oh! transporting prospect,—“shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars, for ever and ever.”

In this strain of remark, I have all along had in mind an *example* of this piety, a pattern of female piety,—“a woman that feareth the Lord,”—the sister and mother, whose departure by death we to-day deplore. I am forbidden to utter in this presence any words of fulsome eulogy. Many voices admonish me, in what I may say, to be truthful and brief. Only a few facts and impressions, such as may represent and suggest, to those who knew her; that fuller history, sacred to memory, to admiration and love, perhaps to silence.

Born in Longmeadow, June 30, 1804. Made a profession of religion, and became a member of the church in her native town in 1821. Married to Luther Wright, Oct. 8, 1829. Resided in Ellington, Conn., four years, from 1829 to 1833, in connection, through her husband, with the Ellington school—a boarding school mainly—established by her husband and Judge Hall conjointly. Resided in Leicester six years, from 1833 to 1839, in connection with Leicester Academy—also in part a boarding school. Removed to Easthampton, Oct., 1839. Was in similar connection with Williston Seminary from its beginning in Dec. 1841, till July, 1849,—eight years, lacking one Seminary term. Such the record, simple and brief. But how much it expresses, and how much more it implies! *Boarding* schools in main or in part. I make note of this. So many young men coming under her care; and young ladies, too, while in the last named institution. Boarders, callers, visitors and their friends, from far and near. What hospitalities must have been rendered! How many to greet, and see to, and

provide for, and make comfortable and contented ; in addition to the care of her own household proper. Leaving now these dates and facts,—and they are all I have obtained from the family,—leaving these, let me advert to a few recollections and impressions of my own respecting the deceased, gathered from a somewhat familiar acquaintance with her during the last ten years.

Mrs. Wright was a woman not of words but of deeds. Her piety, like her nature, was eminently practical—this the keynote of all, and showing itself, less in professions, than in labors of love. She said little, almost nothing about herself, but she labored, working with her hands that which is good, that she might have to give to him that needeth. You saw this at once in her hospitality at home. A grasp of her hand, with one word assuring you that you were welcome ; and then kind deeds, to supply any want, and to make you as comfortable and happy as she could. You saw this in her frequent ministrations with the sick and dying. Never sitting down to condole by words, but going at once to find some labor of love needing her care. If she could *do* something for you or for the family, she was glad to be there—not otherwise. The very house would be searched in quest of such labor. In her tongue was the law of kindness, when she did speak, but the cunning was in her right hand. At home or abroad, she was neither afraid nor ashamed to be found toiling in any way, and every way, for another's aid and comfort. That Saxon word *work* was no terror to her mind, nor ever raised in her breast a thought of the servile and the degrading. She was a diligent woman, resolute, untiring, constant in duties. "She girded her loins with strength, and strengthened her arms. She laid her hands to the spindle, and her hands held the distaff. She was not afraid of the snow for her household. Her candle went not out by night." Her home was the abode of industry, order, decorum. "She looked well to the ways of her household." Students, young men and maidens, by scores and scores, I dare say, have, first and last, had a home in her house, and experienced from her a mother's care and kindness. Many, could they be here to-day, would, with

gratitude and tears, give this as their testimony, and would rise up and call her blessed. She was eminently fitted for this, by her calmness, her prudence, her patience, her kindness, her courage and firmness, and that special excellence of hers, the sterling common sense and judgment, distinguishing her—rare combination and balance of qualities, compelling respect, and obedience too, unless one was wholly given over. Of more than one refractory youth it was said, “Well, he is in good hands; Mrs. Wright can manage him, if any body can.” She never consented to the idea that young people, sent from home, and supported at a school, should be allowed to waste, needlessly and frivolously, the time and means and mind intended for other and better uses. Some months ago, one came to my house, and, speaking of her, and the home he once had in her family, said of her with deep emotion, “What a wonderful mother of a woman Mrs. Wright is! I never saw the equal of her in all my life.”

Mrs. Wright was what some would call, in no disparaging sense, a plain woman. She studied plainness; and yet it was more a nature than a study; more an instinct than an art. Her tastes were severely simple. An article of apparel was liked and chosen by her, if it was suitable and becoming, and would not attract attention, one way nor another. She never made dress a study, as do some. She never noticed so much how people were attired, as how they behaved. Of what was sensible and proper, in speech and demeanor, she was keenly appreciative. Pretension, putting on airs, silly conceits and affectations, passed with her for what they are worth—just nothing. She would say but little, for she was prudent and sparing in speech, but she had her mind about such things.

The deceased was one of the Dorcases. She originated several sewing circles, and sustained them by her individual exertions. Of our own village Circle of Industry she was long time president, and always filled one or more of its prominent offices. She was *queen* there, life, and soul, and body too; for she was always there punctually, unless imperatively hindered. Sadly will she be missed there, and who shall fill that void? Her house, more than any other, was the place for the



meetings. It was characteristic of her, so energetic and self-sacrificing was she. "She hath done what she could."

Pardon me if I indulge in one, only one, of many personal reminiscences, which I fondly cherish. A funeral and a burial from my own home circle. I followed my own promptings as to the expensiveness of the preparations. But I never paid the bills, and never saw them, till the good sister we now mourn for, going herself to Northampton, and by personal search, finding them all, canceled them, and quietly dropped them at my door. The ladies in the parish assisted her in this same, as also in other good deeds, by their generous benefactions. My memorial of her is a Scripture verse, in the human sense and acceptance of it, and characterizing, not one deed alone, but many, yea, marking long toils and sacrifices,—she "came," like her Redeemer, "not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give her life a ransom for many."

In her life and character our deceased sister was in wonderful degree *unselfish*. I have implied this, but I recall it to emphasize it. She sought not her own, but the good of many. She never spared herself. Weariness and painfulness were endured in silence. Was she tired out from watchings with sick neighbors? But there was no complaint, and no word about it any way. Was she sick? You had to find it out as best you could, from a paleness which she could not conceal, or from close questionings which she could not parry. She had, what John Foster calls, "an untamable efficacy of soul;" and that whole force was so engrossed with doing good to others, as to make her oblivious, in great degree, to things personal to herself.

The deceased was the kindest and stanchest of friends toward her pastor. His heart safely trusted in her. Whoever else wavered or faltered, she was firm. Never a doubt or suspicion regarding *her* constancy of esteem and affection.

And then what she was, and what she did, in this religious society. Was the meeting-house to be painted, inside or out? Were improvements to be made, or conveniences to be provided? The ladies have been the prime movers, with Mrs. Wright at their head. In my ministry here, I have had good



helpers, male and female : but among them all, not one more efficient and influential than our departed sister, in maintaining among us gospel privileges and order.

And what as a neighbor ? A cloud of witnesses, to testify what they have seen, and what they have received. Chief among honorable women in this regard. Quiet, peaceable, courteous, frank, generous, given to hospitality, devising liberal things for the poor and needy, assiduous in attentions to the sick, the bereaved, the sorrowing. I wonder if there ever *was* an instance of her denying a neighbor a needed and solicited kindness, which it was in her power to bestow.

And what as a christian ? Blameless and harmless—professing little, but full of good works and alms-deeds which she did—reserved, even to a fault, it may be, in speaking of her christian experience and hope, yet by patient continuance in well-doing showing much love toward God and toward men—utterly disclaiming any merit of her own, and resting all her hope on the atoning merit and righteousness of Jesus her Redeemer. She trusted in Christ ; and she has gone, we doubt not, to be with him in glory.

And what as a wife and mother ? But I stay my hand. This word only, respecting the absent son. How she loved him, and followed him with all the constancy and fond yearnings of her great heart ! “ What, my son ? and what, the son of my womb ? and what, the son of my vows ? ” And at the call of his country, how nobly, with patriotic ardor, she gave him up to the worthy sacrifice and service ! And how in turn he loved his dear mother ! May God be present with him, to sustain and comfort, when the heavy tidings shall reach him.

I have said but little in comparison of what I would say, if I might. But I am forbidden. I have only as it were come to the threshold, and opened the door, but have not entered, to take anything out of the house. But of such jewels there are choicer caskets than any that I could work or weave—*your memories and hearts*, neighbors and friends. *There* will the name of Mrs. Emeline Gregory Wright long remain fragrant and fresh ;

"Embalmed with all our hearts can give,  
Our praises and our tears."

She has gone from us. She has lived long and well, and done her work, and now sleeps in Jesus. We shall sorrow, but we shall rejoice also : rejoice for the grace of God that was in her, making her what she was, and is, and is to be ; and sorrow that she is taken from us, and that we shall see her face no more.

1. The first of these is the  
fact that the number of  
cases of the disease is  
very small. It is estimated  
that only about 100 cases  
occur each year in the  
United States.